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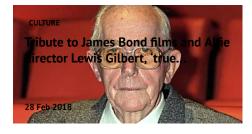


which in this case was the coin Monero

PUBLISHED: Monday, 12 February, 2018, 10:45am UPDATED: Monday, 12 February, 2018, 9:53pm









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that forces visitors' computers to secretly mine cryptocurrency, as part of a worldwide security breach.

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The process, known as crypto-jacking, forces a user's computer to mine cryptocurrency without their permission, generating profits for the hacker.

Government websites were infected with the malware on Sunday after a browser plug-in made by a third-party was compromised. Thousands of sites, including the Britain's National Health Service, and the UK's own data protection watchdog, were affected.

In Australia, the crypto-jacking attack hit the official website of the Victorian parliament, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, the Queensland ombudsman, the Queensland Community Legal Centre homepage, and the Queensland legislation website, which lists all of the state's acts and bills.

Hackers exploited a vulnerability in the popular browser plugin Browsealoud, a programme that converts website text to audio for visually impaired users.



I would have thought on a government website we should have expected these defence mechanisms to be in place

SCOTT HELME

The makers of Browsealoud,
Texthelp, confirmed that hackers
inserted a script known as
Coinhive into their software.
Coinhive hijacks the processing
power of a user's computer to mine
the cryptocurrency Monero.

On Monday morning, Texthelp took the Browsealoud plug-in offline, which meant that new visitors to the affected sites would no longer load the crypto-jacking script.

At the time of publication on Monday, the Queensland legislation website had taken the further step of removing the Browsealoud script entirely, but it



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South China Morning Post remained on the sites of the Victorian parliament, QCAT and the Oueensland ombudsman

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CHINA (/NEWS/CHINA)

HK (/NEWS/HONG-KONG) ASIA (/NEWS/ASIA) WORLD (/NEWS/WORLD) COMMENT (/COMMENT) Scott Helme, a British-based security researcher who

hong-kong-given-top-chinese-leader-where (/LIFESTYLE) CULTURE (/MAGAZINES/SAME GRAVETIN (WATER WEB) SITUE (/MAGAZINES/STYLE) done more to prevent the attack.

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"When you load software like this from a third party, that third party can change it and make it do whatever they want," he said.

"There are easy ways to make sure they don't do that. We don't know how Texthelp were compromised yet, so it is hard to say whether they were really unlucky or there was some kind of inherent problem with what they were doing.

How cybercriminals are making quick money from cryptocurrencies

(http://www.scmp.com/news/world/united-statescanada/article/2131662/cybercriminals-areswarming-around-cryptocurrencies) \rightarrow

"But there were ways the government sites could have protected themselves from this. It may have been difficult for a small website, but I would have thought on a government website we should have expected these defence mechanisms

Related Articles to be in place."

documented the attack on his website, while Texthelp investigation was under way.

ompany has examined the affected file thoroughly and nfirm that it did not redirect any data, it simply used the

(/news/world/europe/article/20135555t/eirs² CPUs to attempt to generate cryptocurrency," it said. bitcoin-heist-600-computers-worthus2-million-stolen-iceland)

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Chinese Premier Li Keqiang pictured

addressing the

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ssiatarcialad M355നിപ്പ് Arise: "The exploit was active for a period of four hours on Sunday. malaysiansात्मस्त्रप्रसर्वे त्रभूष्ट्र- निष्धि Browsealoud service has been temporarily taken offline

CHINA (NEWS/CHINA) and newspectuality notes as in the control of t Browsealoud will remain offline until Tuesday 12.00pm GMT."

Down The Control of the Control of

from his now-defunct website) is benefit government sites affected include Victoria's City of Casey by the family of a deceased hacker who said TV (MDEO) the robbed the man of a fortune in DOUNCIL, Western Australia's City of Bayswater council, South

Wright has claimed to be the inventage alia's City of Unley council, and the office of the

cryptocurrency. Photo: DrCraigWright net Oueensland Public Guardian, which protects the rights of young (/news/asia/article/2134992/man-

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In December The Guardian reported that nearly 1 billion

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billion for 'ripping off deadand Online Video Converter were also being crypto-jacked.

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28 Feb 2018

This article appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition as:

Hackers put virus in government web pages to get bitcoin

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